

## Delivery of Influenza and Pneumococcal Vaccine to the Elderly

**Objective:** *Increase levels of pneumococcal pneumonia and influenza immunization among noninstitutionalized high risk populations to at least 60 %.*

Influenza is a viral disease that can affect people of all ages. Although most people are ill for only a few days, some have a much more serious condition and may have to be hospitalized. Thousands of people die each year from influenza-related illnesses and most of these deaths occur in elderly people. Pneumococcal disease is caused by a bacterium that is associated with much illness and mortality in the United States each year. Anyone can get pneumococcal disease, however, persons over age 65 and those with diabetes or other chronic diseases have the greatest risk of complications. It is recommended that the elderly receive the influenza vaccine annually and the pneumococcal vaccine only once (for most individuals) as an effective means of reducing morbidity and mortality in this age group as well as the hospital and medical costs associated with these diseases. As indicated below, the discrepancy between the influenza immunization levels of the white and black elderly of Virginia is significant and needs to be redressed.

